

## The Disease

As professionals, many of us believe that we are immune from addictions. Actually, there is a well accepted standard that 10% of the adult population in this country is affected by one form or another of chemical dependency. Thus, one might safely estimate that well over three hundred Kentucky licensed therapists and assistants have some form of chemical dependency.

Chemical dependency is a chronic, progressive disease characterized by the use of chemicals in spite of adverse consequences in one's life.

Not recognizing or dealing with chemical dependency will exacerbate the problem. Often we are too engrossed in our own problems to be objective. Our individual efforts result in more stress which increases the severity of the situation. Chemical dependence is a fatal disease; however, if treated, there is hope for recovery.

### Typical Signs or Symptoms of Impairment

- ✓ Work Habits - Misses work or is frequently tardy because of illness or oversleeping; doesn't keep scheduled appointments; submits reports or assignments late; has an unacceptable error rate.
- ✓ Emotions - Becomes irritable, defensive, jealous, easily angered, depressed, or moody. These behaviors may affect relationships and work, leading to social and professional withdrawal.
- ✓ Observations - Smells of alcohol or appears to need drugs or alcohol to "jumpstart" their day; is observed taking drugs or exhibits inappropriate behavior with patients.

- ✓ Personal care - Deteriorating personal hygiene.
- ✓ Defensive behaviors - Becomes angry if someone mentions their drinking, use of drugs or emotional instability; frequently feels guilt about use of alcohol or drugs.

Physical Therapists and Physical Therapist Assistants often buy into the myth that they should be able to handle their chemical dependency because they are health care professionals. What may seem a tremendous burden to one person can become a lighter load when shared with someone else.

The first step is to admit there is a problem. It isn't easy to admit to another person that we are having trouble handling our problems alone. It is a subject that we avoid discussing or confronting. Yet once we take that first step, we begin the process of recovery.

### Services

PACE, Practitioners Alternative Care Effort, for PTs and PTAs helps develop individualized program agreements for recovery which are based upon the unique circumstances of the individual. When needed, monitoring is facilitated in many ways, some being listed below:

- Assistance with identification, assessment, and referral to approved recovery treatment providers.
- Monitoring participant's compliance during recovery and continued physical therapy practice.

- Educate therapists, assistants, employers and other groups about the program.
- Provide encouragement and support to help ensure the participants are able to meet or exceed the generally accepted level of services in the practice of physical therapy.

## Confidentiality

Requests for information and/or assistance are strictly confidential. All records of program participants are confidential. Participation in the PACE program for Physical Therapists and Physical Therapist Assistants is voluntary and will remain anonymous to the Kentucky State Board of Physical Therapy as long as the participant is compliant with the terms of the program agreement.

**PACE is a place to turn  
for help!**

This program is funded by the  
Kentucky State Board of Physical Therapy  
312 Whittington Parkway, Suite 102  
Louisville, Kentucky 40222  
(502)429-7140  
(502)429-7142 (fax)  
<http://pt.ky.gov>

## Eligibility

A PT or PTA may access the program by self referral, board referral, referral from another person or agency such as an employer, coworker or family member. Admission to the PACE program is available to individuals who, at the time of application, meet the requirements listed below.

- Physical Therapists or Physical Therapist Assistants credentialed by the Board or an applicant for credentialing;
- Request participation in the program regardless of whether referred by the board, self, or another person;
- Obtain a chemical dependency assessment, which includes a complete physical and psychosocial evaluation performed by a licensed or certified medical or psychological specialist in the field of drug, alcohol, or other chemical dependency;
- May have attended treatment with an approved provider; and
- Agree to the terms set forth in the agreement.

The Practitioners Alternative Care Effort (PACE) was established by the Legislature in 2000 in order to meet the needs of Physical Therapists and Physical Therapist Assistants as a confidential, non-disciplinary approach to support recovery. PACE is a program developed by, and offered through the Kentucky State Board of Physical Therapy in compliance with KRS Chapter 327.045 and administrative regulation 201 KAR 22:150 concerning the Impaired Practitioner. The purpose of PACE is to identify and assist

physical therapists and physical therapist assistants whose abilities may be compromised by chemical dependency or abuse. Administration of PACE includes the services of Physical Therapists and Physical Therapist's Assistants who are active in long term recovery themselves.

The program recognizes that physical therapy practitioners are unique individuals who have dedicated their adult lives to helping others recover from physical impairments and injuries and are now in need of help themselves. This PACE program believes that a PT or PTA should not lose a job or license due to substance abuse and offers an opportunity for encouragement, treatment and recovery. The program emphasizes hope and is administered with compassion, confidentiality, concern and dignity for the individual.

**To obtain further  
information or  
make a confidential  
referral, please contact:**

**(502) 749-8385**

**This cell phone is answered  
confidentially by one of our  
PACE program committee  
members**

## **P.A.C.E.**

### **Practitioners Alternative Care Effort**



**A confidential program for  
physical therapists and physical  
therapist assistants who abuse  
alcohol or other impairing  
substance.**

**Impaired Physical Therapy  
Practitioners Committee**